FIGURE 16.1: POPULATION CHANGE AND PROJECTIONS

The percentage figure under the population number indicates the rate of change from the previous period. Figures in italics are projections by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. No percentage-change figure is shown in the "2005" column in order to keep the time intervals consistent; similarly, the percentage-change figure in the "2010" column is the change from 2000, not 2005.

	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2020
UPPER PROVIDENCE TWP.	9,477	9,727	10,509	*10,930*	*11,050*	*11,500*
	-	+ 2.64%	+ 8.04%	-	*+ 5.15%*	*+ 0.41%*
Edgmont Twp.	1,410	2,735	3,918	*4,240*	*4,790*	*6,030*
	-	+ 93.97%	+ 43.25%	-	*+ 22.26%*	*+ 25.89%*
Marple Twp.	23,642	23,123	23,737	*23,890*	*23,830*	*23,710*
	-	- 2.20%	+ 2.66%	-	*+ 0.39%*	*- 0.50%*
Media Borough	6,119	5,957	5,533	*5,400*	*5,330*	*5,100*
	-	- 2.65%	- 7.12%	-	*- 3.67%*	*- 4.32%*
Middletown Twp.	12,463	14,130	16,064	*16,070*	*16,370*	*16,850*
	-	+ 13.38%	+ 13.69%	-	*+ 1.90%*	*+ 2.93%*
Nether Providence Twp.	12,370	13,229	13,456	*13,770*	*13,760*	*13,990*
	-	+ 6.94%	+ 1.72%	-	*+ 2.26%*	*+ 1.67%*
Newtown Twp.	11,775	11,366	11,700	*11,570*	*12,000*	*12,170*
	-	- 3.47%	+ 2.94%	-	*+ 2.56%*	*+ 1.42%*
Delaware County	555,023	547,651	550,864	*551,530*	*550,970*	*546,972*
	-	- 1.33%	+ 0.59%	-	*+ 0.02%*	*- 0.73%*

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census and Delaware Valley Planning Commission, 2003.

The chart shows that the County population is essentially stable, although many of the individual municipalities are not. The City of Chester, the boroughs (including Media), and the more densely developed Townships have been losing population while the more rural areas have been gaining. This is consistent with national trends. Except for Edgmont Township, which has a relatively large amount of developable land, the communities shown above have demographic characteristics that are typical for mature communities with little remaining developable land. For such communities, most population change is due to infill and/or redevelopment and of changes in household composition as children grow up, leave their parents' homes, and the parents in turn sell their now too-large houses to younger, growing families.

One important local condition that is not reflected in these projections is the amount of new and proposed development along the Route 252 corridor in Marple and Newtown Townships: we may find that the projections shown above are low for these municipalities. This development is of particular concern to Upper Providence, as it is expected to generate more traffic along this

already-congested corridor as new residents travel to Route 1.

Population Characteristics

The decennial census gathers a wide variety of data in addition to the raw count of persons. The data on household size, age, ethnicity, income, and employment give us insight into how the Township is changing, even if the number of residents changes very little. These are the parameters that are most useful for planning purposes as they allow us to make projections relative to housing and land use issues.

Household and Age Characteristics – Even the most cursory tour of the Township will reveal that the great majority of the housing in the Township is in the form of single-family detached homes: a revelation that is supported by empirical data, as will be considered later in this chapter. This observation suggests that most residents live in family units with children, but the data provided below show that this type of household is not any more common in the Township than it is in the County as a whole. Note that the Census Bureau defines "household" as "all the people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence." This includes individuals who live alone as well as any combination of people who may reside together. "Family" is a type of household, and is defined as "two or more people who reside together and who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption."